

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A method of providing a bone implant comprising:
demineralizing a block of cancellous bone having a first geometry;
wetting the block;
compressing the block from the first geometry to a second geometry smaller than the first geometry;
hardening ~~permitting the block to harden~~ after the block has been compressed to the second geometry.
2. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the second geometry is configured and dimensioned as a pellet.
3. (withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the second geometry is configured and dimensioned as a cylinder.
4. (withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the second geometry is configured and dimensioned as a generally flat shape.
5. (withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the second geometry is configured and dimensioned as a donut-like shape.
6. (withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the second geometry is configured and dimensioned as a dumbbell shape.
7. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
exposing the block to a swelling agent.
8. (withdrawn) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
inserting the block into an anatomical space.
9. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 & 8, further comprising:
re-expanding the block to a third geometry larger than the second geometry.

10. (original) The method of claim 9, wherein the third geometry is smaller than the first geometry.
11. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
inserting the block into a spinal cage.
12. (currently amended) The method of claim 11, further comprising:
re-expanding the block in the spinal cage to a third geometry larger than the second geometry.
13. (original) The method of claim 12, wherein the third geometry is smaller than the first geometry.
14. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, ~~further comprising:~~ wherein the step of wetting the block comprises hydrating the block.
15. (currently amended) A method of providing a bone implant comprising:
demineralizing a block of cancellous bone having a first geometry configuration;
softening the block;
compressing the block from the first geometry configuration to a second geometry configuration smaller than the first geometry configuration;
permitting the block to harden after the block has been compressed to the second geometry configuration.
16. (currently amended) The method of claim 15, wherein the step of softening the block comprises applying ~~at least one of water and~~ a swelling agent to the block.
17. (currently amended) The method of claim 15, further comprising:
inserting the block into a cavity space; and
re-expanding the block to a third geometry configuration larger than the second geometry configuration.
18. (canceled)

19. (canceled)

20. (canceled)

21. (new) The method of claim 17, wherein the cavity is defined by a spinal cage.

22. (new) The method of claim 21, wherein the spinal cage includes perforations and the third geometry of the expanded block fills at least part of the cavity and at least some of the perforations.

23. (new) The method of claim 17, wherein the third geometry is cylindrical in shape.

24. (new) The method of claim 16, wherein the swelling agent is water.

25. (new) The method of claim 1, wherein the hardening step includes drying the block.

26. (new) The method of claim 9, wherein the re-expanding step includes hydrating the block.

27. (new) The method of claim 7, wherein the swelling agent is water.

28. (new) A method of preparing a bone implant comprising:

demineralizing a block of cancellous bone having a first geometry;

hydrating the block;

compressing the block from the first geometry to a second geometry smaller than the first geometry; and

dehydrating the block.

29. (new) The method of claim 28, wherein the step of dehydrating the block includes hardening the block.

30. (new) The method of claim 28, wherein the second geometry has a pellet-like shape.

31. (new) The method of claim 28, further comprising the step of rehydrating the block after the dehydration step.
32. (new) The method of claim 31, wherein the rehydrating step includes wetting the block with a swelling agent.
33. (new) The method of claim 31, wherein the swelling agent is water.
34. (new) The method of claim 28, further comprising the steps of inserting the dehydrated block into a hollow cage and re-expanding the block to a third geometry larger than the second geometry.
35. (new) The method of claim 34, wherein the hollow cage is a spinal cage.
36. (new) The method of claim 34, wherein the hollow cage has a cylindrical shape defining a cavity therein.
37. (new) The method of claim 34, wherein the hollow cage includes perforations and the third configuration of the expanded block fills at least some of the perforations.
38. (new) The method of claim 34, wherein the third geometry is smaller than the first geometry.
39. (new) The method of claim 34, wherein the dehydrating step includes freeze drying the block.
40. (new) The method of claim 28, wherein the second geometry has a pellet-like shape.